



June 6, 2019

David Evans  
Integral Care  
1430 Collier St  
Austin, TX 78704

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)  
445 12th St, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Proceeding 18-336 (National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act)

Integral Care helps people build health and well-being so everyone has the foundation to reach their full potential. We support adults and children living with mental illness, substance use disorder and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As the Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) for Travis County, Integral Care helps provide a strong foundation for well-being. Integral Care supports the designation of a N11 dialing code for the purposes of a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

Integral Care offers mental health crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our crisis services are staffed by a team of experts and include a helpline for anyone who needs immediate emotional support, resources to prevent suicide, and teams that go anywhere someone needs help. Our crisis helpline takes local calls, including National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) calls from our area that are directly routed to our 24/7 Helpline, which have seen a significant increase. In FY2017, our crisis line answered 49,385 calls and in FY2018 we answered 60,159 calls; an increase of 10,774 calls in only one year. In addition to our 24/7 Helpline, Integral Care leads the Austin-Central Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition, a collaboration of local government agencies, healthcare providers, schools and community-based organizations. We strive to reduce suicides through advocacy efforts, implementation of evidence-based strategies and trainings for schools, mental health service providers and the community.

Our role as crisis experts comes from multiple levels of training, accreditation, and support. We are a part of an established network, through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) and Local Intellectual and Disability Authority (LIDAA) within Texas. In order to be a part of these networks, we are required to meet robust standards established by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), the Joint Commission, and the Certified Community of Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC). Being a part of this network means that we not only provide social service resources to people, but we actively connect them to these resources.


Integral Care supports the designation or repurposing of a N11 dialing code for the purposes of a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system. An easy-to-remember 3-digit phone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health hotline would increase public access to life saving crisis resources. Individuals in suicidal crisis are in life-and-death emergencies, which require

rapid, appropriate responses. If the calls go through the already existing NSPL, Integral Care is prepared to partner to ensure the success of a future call line.

The recommendation of the North American Numbering Council's (NANC's) to expand the 211 code to include crisis and suicide prevention calling services would create less timely access to experienced assistance, and call centers would be unprepared to handle a crisis call. Establishing a recognizable national number (similar to 411 or 911) for mental health and suicide prevention would be a transformative step for our nation's public health by making crisis resources more accessible, by addressing the stigma associated with mental health conditions and by relieving burden on other emergency or health systems. Remembering complicated numbers in a time of crisis is not a realistic request, and the FCC understood that in 1967 with the establishment of 911.

On average, one person dies by suicide every two hours in Texas. The designation of a sole-purpose N11 dialing code would help connect the millions of Americans experiencing mental health issues and suicidal thoughts with the services they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Evans  
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